



## Elections to Central Council

At the last Central Council meeting, Alex Scott-Samuel raised the issue of the validity of certain delegates from Branches. A thorough investigation has been undertaken. Unfortunately, despite the elections having been overseen by scrutineers, the investigation has revealed multiple irregularities.

The Constitution sets out the rules relating to elections. The key parts are as below.

### **4 Affiliated Organisations**

*The Association accepts as Affiliated Organisations national, regional, and local Socialist, trade union, co-operative and community organisations.*

*Each national affiliated organisation is also entitled to one vote at Central Council. Each Affiliated Organisation shall have one vote in any postal ballot or by agreed electronic voting.*

### **10 Central Council**

*a) The Central Council shall consist of the principal Honorary Officers (Chair, Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Secretary), twenty directly elected members, branch delegates (see below), and a representative from each nationally affiliated organisation. The Council may elect up to 4 Vice Chairs from amongst its members to support special areas of work.*

*b) For each 30 members or part thereof each branch shall be entitled to elect one of its own members to the Central Council.*

*c) SHA Scotland and SHA Wales shall each appoint representatives on the same arithmetical basis.*

### **11 Elections**

*a) Honorary Officers and members of Central Council shall be elected by ballot prior to the AGM.*

*b) All individual and associated members who are fully paid up by 31 December of the year prior to the AGM shall be entitled to make nominations for Officers and members of the Central Council.*

*c) Nominations shall be invited with the formal notification of the AGM.*

*d) Ballots if required shall be sent out with the Agenda together with a brief statement by and biographical details of candidates and should be returned by the AGM, and results of the elections will be announced at the AGM.*

*e) Central Council shall approve the arrangements for any ballot which is necessary, which will include scrutiny of the votes cast and verification of the results of any ballot held with reference to the following:*

- 1. any contested election for officer of the association by at least two members nominated by Central Council who are not standing as officers of the association in that ballot;*
- 2. any amendment to the constitution of the association by at least two members nominated by Central Council;*
- 3. any resolution put to to all members of the association by at least two members nominated by Central Council.*

### **13 Branches**

*b) Branches are expected to give 4 weeks notice of their AGM and 2 weeks notice of ordinary meetings. Following the completion of the 2017-18 electoral cycle in April 2018, all future Branch AGMs must take place between 12 and **3 weeks** prior to the commencement of the national Central Council (CC) election process (ie, between 12 and 3 weeks prior to the call for national CC nominations). Those elected as CC delegates at Branch AGMs are not permitted to stand in the national CC elections during the same electoral cycle – though they can of course stand for national officer roles.*

## Election for Officers and Directly Elected members

As part of the process leading to the Annual Meeting on 26 February an election was carried out for the 3 Officers and 20 Directly Elected Members of Central Council. There were 379 valid ballots out of 976 eligible voters.

The Scrutineers for these election, Vivien Walsh and Alison Scouler, reported to the AGM. A minor error in the process was identified but this was rapidly corrected. There is no reason to question the validity of the process which used a standard election tool. The list of those elected and not elected, along with the votes cast for each was presented to the AGM.

It is not clear in the Scrutineers' report what checks were made into the eligibility of the candidates.

Only those who were fully paid up members as at 31 December 2019 were eligible to make nomination and stand – it appears 4 members in the directly elected pool should have been ruled out.

By long standing convention applying its powers under the Constitution 11 (h) where a vacancy arises amongst the directly elected members of Central Council this is filled by the person who got the most votes amongst those not elected.

## Election of Branch Delegates

The scrutineers do not report on this aspect of the election process. Proper checks have now been applied.

In order to validly elect delegates Branches must:

- Hold an AGM having given at last 4 weeks' notice and
- Hold the AGM between 12 weeks and 3 weeks prior to the commencement of the national Central Council election process (ie between 12 and 3 weeks prior to the call for national Central Council nominations)

The call for nominations accompanies the formal notification of the Association AGM which must be issued 4 weeks prior to the date of the AGM. To be valid in terms of electing delegates Branch AGMs would have to have been held between 11 January 2020 and 9 November 2019.

The records show the following AGM dates for Branches:-

Chester: AGM 13/2/2020

London: AGM: 2/3/2020

Liverpool: AGM 23/10/2019

Manchester: AGM 21/10/2019

North East: AGM: 10/2/2020

Oxfordshire: AGM 14/11/2019

West Midlands: AGM: 30/11/2019 (Notice of AGM sent out 23/10/19)

Yorkshire: AGM 27/2/2020

Oxfordshire held its AGM within the correct window, but the minutes of the AGM show they did not elect any delegates to Central Council.

There is no facility for Branches to vary their delegation or to conduct election of delegates other than at the AGM of the Branch.

The examination of the record shows that those elected as delegates by West Midlands Branch comply with the requirements. Those from other Branches are not eligible to attend Central Council.

## SHA Scotland and SHA Wales

For some purposes SHA Scotland and SHA Wales have their own identity with a degree of autonomy and a distinction is drawn between them and other Branches.

The Constitution states that Branches “elect” “members” to Central Council (as above) whilst SHA Scotland and SHA Wales “appoint” “representatives”.

The position is not entirely clear. It would be expected that SHA Scotland and SHA Wales would each hold a meeting and appoint representatives to Central Council in accordance with their own standing orders (or customary practices). Logically this would have to be before the date when nominations for directly elected members of Central Council were requested.

There is no requirement placed on SHA Scotland and SHA Wales for any formal notifications and so it must be assumed that the representatives notified as being from SHA Scotland and SHA Wales are valid.

## Affiliated Bodies

The Constitution simply states - *Each national affiliated organisation is also entitled to one vote at Central Council.* How any affiliate decides to exercise this entitlement is left as a matter for them. No affiliated body has sent any notification of its intention to send anyone to Central Council meetings.

## Conclusion

Until the next round of elections (expected to be linked to an AGM in March 2021) the membership of Central Council is as follows:-

Carol Ackroyd (Directly elected)

Tony Beddow (SHA Wales)

Steve Bedser (WMids)

Gillian Black (Directly elected – replacement)

Hazel Brodie (SHA Scotland)

Martin Brooks (Directly elected)

Lawrence Cotter (Directly elected – replacement)

Terry Day (Directly elected)

Brian Fisher (Elected Chair)

Patrick French (Directly elected)

Brian Gibbons (Directly elected)

Jean Hardiman-Smith (Elected Secretary)

Rizwan Jalil (Directly elected)

Tony Jewell (Directly elected)

Coral Jones (Directly elected)

Gurinder Josan (WMids)

Parbinder Kaur (WMids)

John Kennedy (Directly elected – replacement)

Mark Ladbrooke (Directly elected)

Irene Leonard (Elected Treasurer)

Peter Mayer (WMids)

Joe McManners (Directly elected)

Katrina Murray (SHA Scotland)

Jabu Nala-Hartley (Directly elected)

Paramjit Randhara (WMids)

Jane Roberts (Directly elected)

Mike Roberts (Directly elected – replacement)

Alex Scott-Samuel (Directly elected)

Alison Scouller (SHA Wales)

Kathrin Thomas (Directly elected)

Judith Varley (Directly elected)

Steve Watkins (Directly elected)

Total 32 members- 3 Officers, 20 Directly Elected, 2 from Wales, 2 from Scotland and 5 from West Midlands